

BRUCE PALMER

FIELDWORK by the Fiji Museum during 1971 has concentrated on extending the intensive study of the Namataku district of the upper Sigatoka Valley about 40 miles upriver. Fergus Clunie and Kolinio Moce recorded oral traditions relating to the sequence of settlement, relationship of social groups, and identification of mounds belonging to these groups. A vast complex of settlements was mapped in the area that was the head of navigation for canoe traffic on the Sigatoka River. It also marked the narrowing of the valley where the hill country began. Stone-walled villages, flatland ring-ditches, *naga* ceremonial sites, caves defended by stone walls, a petroglyph cave site, and stone fish weirs were mapped. Interesting features included the first field occurrence of *offensive* stone walls built by the mountain people during their attacks on one of the defended villages. A ridge peak fortification with ditch and bank defenses supplemented by a line of pits was reminiscent of the defensive features recorded for Luatuanu'u in Western Samoa (cf. S. D. Scott and R. C. Green, "Investigation of SU-LU-41, A Large Inland Fortification," in *Archaeology in Western Samoa*, vol. 1, pp. 205-209). A cave investigated in the valley floor complex is scheduled for excavation in 1972 together with a deep, stratified area a short distance from it. A single sherd with a rim similar to Lapita plain ware was found in the cave. A random selection of sherds from the stratified area suggests that it may be possible to trace the evolution of the present-day Nakoro pottery from earlier forms. A pottery cylinder was found exposed in the lower levels of the stratified area that seems to be related to the enigmatic stands or braziers found in the Sigatoka dunes by Lawrence and Helen Birks.

On Wakaya Island a shallow deposit in a cave closed by a stone wall was excavated by Bruce Palmer, Fergus Clunie, and Kolinio Moce. On an old weathered deposit in a short lava tube, fire scoops had been dug out and a series of firing layers superimposed on each other. A few paddle-impressed sherds of cross-relief type were found in the lower scoops, but in the upper levels an abrupt change to appliqué and combed sherds was noted. Except for a section of shell bracelet, no other artifacts were found. No sample has been submitted for radiocarbon dating.

Bruce Palmer is Director of the Fiji Museum.

The same party investigated a small beach site at Caboni in northern Viti Levu, where a headland fringed by stone fish traps contains a small, overgrown beach. A low circular stone-lined mound with a fill of sand was seen in the scrub, while stone cairns exist on the headland itself, which Gifford designated Site 12. A crescentic terrace feature was excavated and shown to be an artificial one based on natural exposure of massive rocks that were added to in order to form the face of the terrace. Natural talus infill from the slope above it had been added to so that there was no visible difference in the makeup of the terrace from base to surface, apart from the surface layer of beach sand. Sherds were few in number and were either plain or late incised. One or two fragmentary paddle-impressed sherds were found which could have been derived from the bringing-in of fill from the slopes above the terrace. No postholes were found, nor was there any evidence of the function of the terrace itself, which can be described as a late archaeological feature at that site. Sherds seen in rock niches nearby were all late Ra style, a finding that is understandable, as the Ra manufacturing sites lie only a few miles to the east.

Work continued on preparing field notes for publication, and it is hoped that a bulletin on the upper Sigatoka Valley will be published late in 1972. Lawrence Birks' manuscript on the Sigatoka dunes excavations was prepared for the press, while Elizabeth Shaw's manuscript on Taveuni sites was revised for publication. During the year a further edition of *Fiji Museum Records* was published. Included were papers by W. Dickinson on sand tempers in Fijian pottery, Rosalie Lambert's botanical identification of impressions on Sigatoka potsherds, and a paper on *naga* ceremonial sites in the upper Sigatoka Valley by Bruce Palmer.

Negotiations were begun to preserve a twin ring-ditch fortification near Suva which has been threatened with destruction by housing subdivision. Other large fortifications on Wakaya Island were also subject to negotiation, and the owners agreed to allow Fiji Museum to have eventual guardianship of the more important sites when the island is developed for tourist purposes. The Director of the Fiji Museum was appointed to the council of the newly formed National Trust for Fiji, one of whose functions is to help preserve historic and archaeological sites in cooperation with the Fiji Museum. In summary, the year was not a spectacular one, but valuable consolidation work was undertaken, with the promise of interesting results from what appears to be the first inland Lapita site in Fiji.